



# Winter Report

Photo: Heather Katsoulis, Creative Commons

## Moving toward a coal-free Massachusetts

### Another step to reduce global warming pollution

Environment Massachusetts is calling on Gov. Deval Patrick to take steps now that will make the state completely coal-free by the year 2020.

Our goal is for Massachusetts to eliminate the state's largest sources of mercury and other hazardous air pollutants and to rid ourselves of a major source of global warming pollution.

“The good news is that the governor has all of the legislative authority he needs to wean Massachusetts off its dependence on coal-fired power,” said Environment Massachusetts Field Associate Anika James. “Our challenge is to show him the public support is there.”

### We can be coal-free by 2020

Mercury from coal-fired power plants is a powerful neurotoxin even at low levels, and every year soot and smog cause 58,000 asthma-related trips to the emergency room in Massachusetts. It's well into the 21st century, and we should be getting our energy from clean, renewable sources that won't make us sick. Brayton Point, the largest coal-fired power plant in the state, is also the single largest source of carbon pollution in Massachusetts.

Massachusetts can change all of this. Thanks to the Green Communities Act that we helped pass in 2008, Massachusetts was named number one in the nation for energy efficiency. In the past five years, Massachusetts' use of solar energy has increased 46-fold, and this year we hope to become home to the nation's first offshore wind farm.



Photo: Conservation Law Foundation, Creative Commons

▲ Salem Harbor Station coal-fired power plant.

Environment Massachusetts has teamed up with like-minded groups to form the Coal-Free Massachusetts coalition, working to convince Gov. Patrick to get the state off coal by 2020.

### Gov. Patrick has the power

By utilizing existing laws and policies that Gov. Patrick has already championed—

including the Global Warming Solutions Act and the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative—Massachusetts can develop enough renewable energy and save enough electricity through efficiency to make old, dirty coal plants obsolete. Environment Massachusetts and our coalition are organizing legislators, businesses and citizens all across the Commonwealth to push for a coal-free future.



Photo: Staff

### take action

Together with a national coalition, we helped deliver more than 3 million comments to the EPA supporting a new carbon pollution rule.

Tell the EPA we must do more to prevent catastrophic global warming online at: [www.EnvironmentMassachusetts.org](http://www.EnvironmentMassachusetts.org).



Photo: Staff

## To our members

With 2013 well underway, we are excited about the opportunities ahead for protecting our air and water, the places we love and the environmental values so many of us share. And here at Environment Massachusetts, we're ready for action!

Already this year, we've talked to thousands of people across the Commonwealth about getting to 50,000 solar roofs in Massachusetts within the next five years. We're getting the word out in the media that we don't want fracking—a dangerous new technology for tapping natural gas reserves—in our state. And, we're calling for the state to move beyond coal.

I'm ready to take on the challenges we'll face this year, and I know we couldn't do it without your support, so thank you for all you do.

Sincerely,

Johanna Neumann  
Regional Director

## Recent action

### Looming threat of fracking in Western Mass.

Last June, a U.S. Geological Survey report found shale gas deposits in Western Massachusetts that may contain natural gas. This gas could be accessed by a dangerous form of gas drilling called hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking.”

So far, Massachusetts has been spared the effects of this dangerous and destructive process. But if fracking were to start here, Western Massachusetts would be at risk for increased air pollution in a region that already has the worst smog levels in the state. Fracking also involves a toxic soup of undisclosed chemicals—posing a threat to groundwater, rivers, streams.

In September, Danielle Falzon, of Environment Massachusetts Research & Policy Center, released a report on the costs of fracking—from road damage to healthcare costs—in communities that already experience the process. Environment Massachusetts is working to build momentum to ban fracking across the state and to prevent Massachusetts from importing contaminated fracking wastewater from other states.

### Heeding Sandy's wakeup call

When Superstorm Sandy slammed the Mid-Atlantic in late October, it claimed lives and caused tens of billions of dollars in damage. It also brought more attention to scientists' warnings that global warming will cause intense storms like Sandy to become more frequent.

To slow this trend, it is critical that we stop creating the carbon pollution that fuels global warming. The Obama administration is on the verge of taking a critical step in that direction as this newsletter goes to print. The Environmental Protection Agency is expected to soon finalize the first-ever carbon pollution standards for new coal-fired power plants. Environment Massachusetts, and our sister state groups in the Environment America federation, helped demonstrate historic support for these standards, and will continue to push to limit carbon for existing plants, as well.

The climate is changing – are your investments?

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Photo: Jeff Cutler, Creative Commons

▲ Waves approaching homes and businesses along Nantasket Beach in Hull during Superstorm Sandy.

# Wind power for a cleaner Massachusetts

Photo: Chris Devers, Creative Commons

In November, Environment Massachusetts Research & Policy Center released our latest report on wind energy. The report, “Wind Power for a Cleaner America,” outlines the core environmental and economic benefits that wind energy yields. The report calls on United States lawmakers to commit to supporting policies that would increase renewable energy.

## Like taking 13 million cars off the road

Coal- and natural gas-fired power plants pollute our air, are major contributors to global warming, and consume and often poison vast amounts of water—harming our rivers and lakes and leaving less water for other uses. Wind energy has none of these problems. It produces no air pollution, makes no contribution to global warming, and uses no water.

America has more than doubled its use of wind power since the beginning of 2008 and we are starting to reap the environmental rewards. Wind energy now displaces about 68 million metric tons of global warming pollution each year—as much as is produced by 13 million cars.

If construction of new wind energy projects continues from 2013 to 2016 at a pace comparable to that of recent years, the U.S. could reduce global warming pollution by an additional 56 million metric tons in 2016—equivalent to the amount produced by 11 million passenger vehicles, bringing total pollution reduction to the equivalent amount produced by 24 million cars.

## Saving 10 million gallons of water

In addition to eliminating air pollution, wind energy helps conserve water. Wind energy currently saves more than enough water nationwide to meet the needs of a city the size of Boston, and there is still plenty of room for growth.

If wind energy continues to develop at its current rate through 2016, we would save enough water to meet the annual water needs of 600,000 people.

## Victory for wind tax credits

To achieve our full potential to harness the power of wind, construction of new generating capacity will need to continue to grow—which will happen only if policies such as tax incentives and renewable electricity standards are extended and strengthened.

When key federal wind incentives were set to expire at the end of 2012, Environment Massachusetts and our partners around the country went to work. Fortunately, with strong support from President Obama and our House and Senate allies, and the hundreds of Environment Massachusetts activists who raised their voices on the issue, Congress renewed critical wind power tax credits as a part of the beginning-of-the-year deal to avert the “fiscal cliff.”

Without these tax credits, wind power projects would have been put on the sidelines this year, meaning less clean energy, more pollution, and the loss of 37,000 American jobs. Our victory means these tax credits will continue to help make wind power a true American success story.



Wind Power for a Cleaner America

read more

Read the full report online at:  
[www.EnvironmentMassachusetts.org](http://www.EnvironmentMassachusetts.org)



Photo: Cape Wind

## Interview with Mark Rodgers of Cape Wind

**The Cape Wind Project is a proposed wind farm poised to become the first offshore wind energy project in U.S. coastal waters.**

*You've been at this a long time. What have some of the obstacles been and how have you overcome them?*

Cape Wind has faced daunting challenges these past 12 years. Getting the project permitted took 10 years and our lead reviewing agency was changed mid-stream. Thanks to the strong support of leading environmental organizations like Environment Massachusetts, there has been a lot of positive education about the compelling environmental, energy and economic benefits of Cape Wind and the tide has definitely shifted in our favor. We've completed the permitting process, we have long-term contracts to sell most of our power output to National Grid and NSTAR, and we're now seeking project financing.

*Over the years, what role has citizen support played in making Cape Wind a reality?*

Citizen support has been crucial. For example, in 2006 project opponents teamed up with the Alaskan congressional delegation to insert language in a Coast Guard bill that would have outlawed Cape Wind! It took a massive grassroots response to beat that back and to keep Cape Wind moving forward.

Many long-time members reading this newsletter can recall reading action alerts from this organization and getting involved to help Cape Wind. You should feel proud of the role you played in making Massachusetts home to America's first offshore wind farm.

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# Environment Massachusetts

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Photo: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

### Environment Massachusetts

#### Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open space. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment Massachusetts. We focus exclusively on protecting Massachusetts' air, water and open space. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

## Victory will keep solar rising

In August, Gov. Patrick signed an Environment Massachusetts-backed bill that will dramatically expand access to solar energy for families, businesses and local governments.

Among the major improvements was an expansion of the net-metering program, which allows local governments, businesses and homeowners to sell the electricity they generate from solar panels and other small onsite renewable energy sources back to utilities to offset their electric bills, and even generate some revenue.

"Solar is an unlimited, pollution-free resource with no fuel costs that will help Massachusetts meet our energy and environmental goals. This victory will take Massachusetts to the next level of leadership on renewable energy," said Environment Massachusetts' Anika James. Net-metering is a critical part of the state's clean energy plan. Homeowners, municipalities and businesses credit the program as being a primary driver behind a 46-fold increase in solar in just the last five years.



Photo: Staff

◀ *Our Regional Director, Johanna Neumann, with Holyoke Mayor Alex Morse, visiting the largest solar installation in New England.*

For more information on our efforts to expand solar in the state of Massachusetts, visit us online at:  
 [www.EnvironmentMassachusetts.org](http://www.EnvironmentMassachusetts.org).